

**COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
September 8, 2008
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCIL MEMBER ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH M. BUTLER, JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER PETER L. CLOUGH
COUNCIL MEMBER JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM**

ALSO PRESENT: **CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU**

Council and staff toured the Sewage Treatment Plant beginning at 6 p.m.

Report - Summit Woods – Iroquois Ave. West Recreational Trail Survey

Mayor Graham commented that the majority of Council seems to be opposed to the trail and noted that it is the Council's desire to move expeditiously with installing a sidewalk on the west side of Washington Street.

Council Member Clough stated that he believed the decision was made in February not to do the trail.

Mrs. Corriveau said the decision was made to do the sidewalk on Washington Street long before the trail.

Mr. Hauk said the sidewalk is at the point in the design where gradient permission is being sought from property owners but other projects in the City have been put in front of this one.

Council Member Clough stated that he feels this sidewalk should be completed with the Summit Woods project and be ready when the housing development opens.

Mrs. Corriveau said there have been no certificates of occupancy issued and cannot say when that will happen because it is in the developer's hands. She added that there was discussion in March, and from that meeting Council did not want to apply for a grant for the trail. Mrs. Corriveau added that staff feels that a developed, lit walkway in this area will happen.

Mayor Graham told Council that he spoke with Mr. Fralick about the sidewalk and a short-term resolution involves the City providing a crossing guard until the sidewalk is installed.

Council Member Butler asked if a traffic light was going to be installed at the intersection of Summit Woods.

Mr. Hauk replied that once base locations are set then materials can be ordered.

Council Member Smith suggested having City crews work on the sidewalk instead of bidding out the project.

Mr. Hauk told Council that DPW looked into it but that option was not feasible.

Council Member Clough suggested examining a left turn only lane into the Samaritan complex and into Summit Woods.

Mr. Hauk said he did not believe there would be a left turn only lane but would look into it.

Council Member Burns asked if it would be a possibility to send a City Bus into Summit Woods to bring children to and from school if the sidewalk is not in place when school is in session.

Mrs. Corriveau said that the schools would be sending a bus.

Council Member Burns asked if Summit Woods fell within the minimum distance from the school.

Mrs. Corriveau told Council she does not know what the regulations are on providing school bus service by City Bus. She did speak with Chief Goss about reducing the speed limit to 30 mph sooner coming from the Town of Watertown into the City. Mrs. Corriveau also said staff will look at painting the markings for a crosswalk.

Presentation – Alternative Energy – Council Member Jeffrey M. Smith

Council Member Smith presented to Council several ways to harness and implement alternative energy sources in the City of Watertown which he said would reduce energy costs to the city and achieve electric energy independence. He examined using solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, and methane as sources of energy and using alternative fuel vehicles. Council Member Smith said it would be most beneficial to be diverse in energy sources and that all types of alternative energy can be utilized to achieve energy independence.

Council Member Butler commented that the idea of a mini-hydro seems like a very good idea and suggested perhaps collaborating with JCC or DANC.

Mayor Graham asked regarding our franchise agreement with National Grid if the City can sell any City-produced power to private entities.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that we cannot but suggested talking with NYPA about assisting with a mini-hydro or geothermal source.

Council Member Clough reminded Council that Mr. Lu had targeted sites on the Black River for mini-hydros and hoped Council and staff would not lose focus on where this idea could go. He suggested looking at the report Mr. Lu compiled.

Council Member Smith suggested doing some research on these sources such as asking IBEW about their solar panels.

Mrs. Corriveau said NYPA can give advice on how to get capital investment.

Council Member Smith replied that NYSEDA can do that as well.

Mayor Graham stated he hopes Council Member Smith will keep up on this issue. He added that City Codes must also be aware of new technology and equipment needed to harness alternative energy.

Mrs. Corriveau advised Council that City Codes, Planning, the City Attorney and the Manager's office have already met regarding the issue.

Council Member Smith told Council there is nothing in the City Code about having solar panels.

Traffic Report – Mullin/Holcomb & Holcomb/Clinton Intersections – Kurt Hauk, City Engineer

Mr. Hauk presented to Council a powerpoint presentation showing studies done at the Mullin/Holcomb and Holcomb/Clinton intersections. He showed a simulated view of traffic at the intersections and what affect the projected population growth of one percent over ten years would have on vehicular flow.

Council and staff reviewed the packet handed out at the meeting which listed various possibilities for the intersections, including four-way stop signs or traffic lights.

Council Member Clough asked if the signals would drive people to Sherman, Massey or Orchard streets to avoid those intersections.

Mrs. Corriveau told Council that staff knows when the peak times are and that the rest of the time traffic seems to flow rather easily. She stated that in non-peak hours the proposed lights would be put on flash.

Mayor Graham asked if it is staff recommendation to put lights at both intersections.

Mr. Hauk said he would recommend to have signals at both intersections and during non-peak hours have signals flashing.

Mayor Graham asked about the cost for this project.

Mr. Hauk said he does not have any estimates but it could fall in the \$200,000 range.

Council Member Burns said she is happy this is finally a recommendation as residents have been waiting for relief at these intersections.

Mr. Hauk suggested adding the signals to the capital plan.

Mayor Graham asked about a projected time table.

Mrs. Corriveau said there is time to put together a design and that there is not too much flexibility in the budget right now. She added that there is no in-house expertise to do signal designs.

Council Member Smith suggested going back to the design for Summit Woods and inputting the information for these two intersections into that design.

Council Member Clough asked about reallocating funds in order to pay for this project.

Mrs. Corriveau told Council that since the cost of road salt has gone up 300% that is a bigger challenge to accommodate right now.

Woolworth

Council Member Clough asked that Council be kept up to date.

Erosion Issues at Bicentennial Park

Council discussed a report by Planner Christine Hoffman regarding a possibly contaminated disposal area in Bicentennial Park and erosion of the river bank. Upon testing, the disposal area was found to be uncontaminated but the DEC was not satisfied with the state of the river bank. Prior to work being done on the new trail, fencing, picnic area and overlook projects the erosion control must take place.

Council Member Clough asked if there is a better location for the proposed overlook.

Mrs. Corriveau said that even if the overlook is relocated the erosion still has to be addressed, based on what the DEC says.

Mrs. Hoffman said the overlook was chosen because it is the highest in the park.

Council Member Clough commented that erosion is part of nature and questioned why the City needs to fix it if it happens naturally. He added that he would like an answer from the DEC.

Mayor Graham asked what would happen if the City does not fix it.

Mrs. Corriveau replied that the City can be fined.

Mayor Graham stated he recommends not doing anything about the site.

Council Member Smith questioned why a hazardous materials team is needed to clean up the area but it tested negative for hazardous materials.

Mrs. Hoffman told Council that there is still broken glass and residual mercury in the thermometers.

Mayor Graham noted that mercury is only hazardous if it is ingested.

Council Member Clough suggested contacting Senator Aubertine regarding the DEC's request to fix the erosion.

Council Member Butler requested a copy of the letter from the DEC.

Mr. Hauk told Council that since it is an old dump site, people have been digging along the banks looking for old bottles and in the process have upset the banks of the river.

Council Member Butler asked if the City could post signs to prohibit trespassing.

Mrs. Hoffman told Council that the thermometers actually washed down the river.

Mayor Graham suggested cleaning up the thermometers.

Sidewalk Project Report

Mrs. Corriveau said this report proposes work on district five, which would start in July of 2009.

Mr. Hauk told Council that this actually would begin in the spring of 2010 to coincide with the billing cycle of the comptroller's office.

Council Member Butler noted that Ten Eyck Street had 80% of its sidewalk blocks laid last year by City crews but are now being torn up. He suggested better communication between department heads and employees.

Mr. Hauk replied that the sidewalks are being replaced by National Grid at their cost.

Gaffney Drive

Mayor Graham said he is glad to see work is moving ahead on Gaffney Drive.

Work session ended at 9:10 p.m.

Amanda C. Lewis
Deputy City Clerk

